



THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • FRIDAY • AUGUST 30, 2024 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 40 • LATE CITY EDITION



READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/newindianexpress
twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress



U.K. UNIV TO OPEN FIRST FOREIGN CAMPUS IN INDIA UNDER NEP 2020
The University of Southampton was on Thursday granted approval by the University Grants Commission to set up a branch campus in India

CAMPUS EXPECTED TO COME UP IN GURUGRAM
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Union Minister of Education Dharmendra Pradhan handed over the Letter of Intent to the UK university at an event in Delhi. The new campus is likely to be located in Gurugram, within the Delhi NCR. It will offer a wide range of undergraduate and post-graduate degree courses starting in July 2025

ONE OF UK'S TOP RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES
■ The University of Southampton is one of the UK's top research institutions with one-third of its research rated as 'world-leading'
■ The National Education Policy 2020 calls for internationalisation of education in India by inviting leading foreign universities to set up branch campuses here and collaborate with local institutions

80th
RANK FOR UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON IN THE LATEST QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKING

We are not interfering with the marriages solemnised by Islamic rituals under the Muslim Personal Law at all. Our only condition is that Islam prohibited marriages will not be registered



In the pre-independence Act, There was scope of misuse by both authorised licensees as well as by citizens for underage/ minor marriages and forcefully arranged marriages without the consent of the parties

Registration of Muslim marriages mandatory

New bill passed in Assam House to deter teenage pregnancy: CM

PRASANTA MAZUMDAR @Guwahati

THE Assam Assembly on Thursday passed the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024, which makes it mandatory to register marriages with the government. Since the legal age of marriage of 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys cannot be contravened, it will act as a strict deterrent against teenage pregnancy and improve overall growth of girls, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The bill replaces the British-era Law, The Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1935. "Today is a historic day in our effort to fight the social evil of child marriage. The #AssamLegislativeAssembly has passed the Assam Compulsory Registration of Muslim Marriages and Divorces Bill, 2024," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted on X.

"I thank all the legislators who pledged their support to this Bill and Govt's vision of preventing child marriage. This Bill is above party politics and is a means to give our girls

KAZI CUT OUT

NEW LAW TO HELP CHECK POLYGAMY, ENFORCE MAINTENANCE RIGHTS

- 1 All earlier registrations of marriages conducted by Kazis will remain valid, said Himanta Biswa Sarma
- 2 Only new marriages will come under the purview of the legislation where registration has to be done with govt
- 3 The Kazi system for registering Muslim marriages will end. Assam has 90 Kazis, most of them govt teachers

a life of dignity," Sarma said. Earlier in the day, he told the Assembly that the government's aim was not only to abolish child marriages but also to replace the Kazi (religious official) system. He said all marriages would be registered as per an order of the Supreme Court. It emerged during the discussions in the Assembly that Assam has 90 Kazis, most of them government teachers. On August 22, revenue and disaster management minister Jogen Mohan had stated in the statement of Object and Reasons that The Assam Moslem Marriages and Divorces Registration Act was adopted by the British India government for the then Province of Assam for

Muslim religious and social arrangements. He said under it, the registration of marriages and divorces is not mandatory and the machinery of registration is informal. "There remains a scope of registering marriages of intended person below 21 years (in case of male) and 18 years (in case of female) and hardly any monitoring (is) made for (the) implementation of this Act throughout the state, which attracts and invites huge amount of litigation in the criminal/civil court," Mohan said. "There is a scope of misuse by both authorised licensee as well as by citizens for underage/minor marriages and forcefully arranged marriages without consent," he stated.

Purported RG Kar calls to family add to ire



Women participate in a rally in Kolkata on Thursday | P1

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @Kolkata

THREE purported audio recordings of phone calls allegedly made by RG Kar Medical College on August 9 to the parents of the rape-murder victim surfaced on Thursday, indicating the institution's muddled approach and insensitivity while breaking the horrific news to the relatives. In the first call, the hospital authorities simply said their daughter was 'a little ill' and asked them to come immediately. Two minutes later, another call came saying she was very sick. In the third call, again after two minutes, the caller claimed their daughter had committed suicide.

The victim's family members said the hospital authorities deliberately misled them, though they knew their daughter had been raped and murdered. The victim's father said when they went into the hospital, they saw their daughter's body wrapped in a green bedsheet. But media images later showed the body in a blue bedsheet. What prompted the hospital to change the bedsheet, he wondered. "There has been a deliberate attempt to suppress facts. We want the CBI to investigate why the Kolkata Police misled us," he said and demanded a thorough investigation into the events leading to her murder. On August 10, authorities ar-

rested Sanjay Roy, a civic volunteer frequently seen at RG Kar, whose presence was captured on CCTV near the seminar hall where the body was first seen. A Bluetooth device found at the scene further implicated Roy. According to CBI sources, Roy confessed to the crime during interrogation. Meanwhile, the Kolkata Police arrested a woman, Renuka Singh (38), whose alleged stoning left police sergeant Debashish Chakraborty badly injured in an eye during the Nabanna Abhijan rally a couple of days ago. The city police are also looking for other miscreants who indulged in large-scale violence during the rally that day.

RELIEF TO DKS IN DA CASE AS HC JUNKS PLEAS OF CBI, YATNAL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE High Court of Karnataka on Thursday dismissed the petitions filed by the CBI and BJP MLA Basanagouda R Patil Yatnal, questioning the Siddaramaiah government's decision to withdraw the previous BJP government's consent to CBI to prosecute Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar in a disproportionate assets (DA) case. Terming that the petitions are not maintainable, the court granted liberty to the petitioners to approach the Supreme Court for remedy. Since the conflict is between the Union

government's authority, which represents the CBI, and the state's autonomy, the SC has to settle it under Article 131 and not the high court, a division bench of Justices K Somashekar and Umesh M Adiga said in their order. The petitioners challenged the notification issued by the Congress government on November 28, 2023, withdrawing the consent given to the CBI by the previous BJP government to prosecute Shivakumar. The CBI also challenged another government order issued on December 22, 2023, followed by a corrigendum on December 26, 2023, through which the case against Shivakumar was entrusted to the Lokayukta Police for investigation. The Lokayukta Police registered a case on February 8 under the Prevention of Corruption Act and is probing it. P4

HC adjourns CM's plea hearing to Saturday

The Karnataka High Court on Thursday adjourned to Saturday the hearing on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's petition challenging the legality of Governor Thawarchand Gehlot's sanction for his prosecution in the MUDA case. P4

SC slams T'gana CM's remarks on Kavitha bail

SUCHITRA KALYAN MONANTY @NewDelhi

THE Supreme Court on Thursday slammed Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy for his inappropriate comments over the granting of bail to BRS leader K Kavitha and AAP leader Manish Sisodia in cases linked to the Delhi excise policy scam.

During a media interaction, Reddy had wondered how Kavitha got bail in just five months, when Delhi deputy CM Sisodia got it only after spending 15 months in jail, while Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal is yet to get relief. He hinted at a 'deal' between the BJP and BRS for securing bail for Kavitha.

"The statements did not go down well with the apex court. 'Is this a kind of statement which should be made by a CM? A constitutional functionary is speaking in this manner! Why should they drag the court in political rivalry? Do we pass orders after consulting political parties? We are not bothered by politicians or if anybody criticises our orders,' a three-judge bench headed by Justice B R Gavai said. The bench said it is the duty of political parties to show respect to institutions.

Finance panel starts tax devolution consultations

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

THE 16th Finance Commission on Thursday said that it is open to considering the Karnataka government's suggestion on rejudging the criterion with regard to devolution of taxes to the states, but the final decision is "far away". Commission chairman Dr Arvind Panagariya said Karnataka has submitted a proposal stating that the 45% weightage given to the distance of per capita income of a state, assigned by the 15th Finance Commission, should be reduced to 25%.

"We understand the spirit behind the proposal. The process of consultation is under way. Final decisions are quite

far away," he told reporters after holding meetings with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and officials of the state's finance department. Dr Panagariya clarified that the state's suggestion to bring levying of cess and surcharge into the divisible pool to be shared between the Centre and the states requires an amendment to Article 261 of the Constitution. "At this stage, it is very difficult to give a view on it. One item excluded from the divisible pool is cess and surcharge, which go directly into the Centre's consolidated fund. There had been issues with several FCs that something ought to be done. Because that deprives the states of sharing one part of revenue," he said. P4

EXPRESS READ

VIP treatment: Darshan shifted to Ballari jail

Bengaluru: Amid tight police security, actor Darshan Thoogudeepa was shifted to Ballari jail from Bengaluru Central Prison on Thursday. Four other accused were also sent to different jails in the state. Darshan was transported in a police van escorted by an ACP-rank officer and another police vehicle tailing it | P3

Actor-MLA Mukesh booked for rape

Kochi: Actor-politician M Mukesh and three other prominent actors have been booked in cases of rape and sexual assault by the Kerala police on Thursday. Amid intense protests by the opposition, the CPM MLA obtained relief from a court in Kochi, which granted him protection from arrest until September 3 | P5



CROC SCARE...
One of the crocodiles rescued from a residential locality in flood-hit Vadodra, Gujarat, on Thursday. "We have rescued 10 crocodiles in the last five days. Two have been released and eight are still with us. We will release them when the water level of the Vishwami river decreases," an official said | P1

Tunnel road feasible, but has many risks, will outweigh benefits

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar, who is also Bengaluru Development Minister, had proposed a network of underground road tunnels running 191km and connecting 11 high-density corridors in Bengaluru, costing upwards of Rs 30,000 crore, to be implemented in phases. The first among them, the 18.5-km tunnel road from Esteem Mall near Hebbal Flyover to Central Silk Board Junction, will be implemented in the first phase, and was approved by the state cabinet on August 22. Experts, however, are concerned over its impacts. TNE in a three part series, beginning today, will look at the implications of this project that has received much criticism.

AKNISREE KARTHIK & MOHAMMED YACOUB @Bengaluru

WHILE the state cabinet has granted administrative approval to the ambitious 18.5-km tunnel road project linking Esteem Mall in Hebbal with Silk Board Junction in South-East Bengaluru, experts have red-flagged it, raising concerns. They have said that despite the project's feasibility, it'll come with many challenges to deal with, besides the Rs 12,690 crore investment will outweigh the benefits. Dr D Paramesha Naik, Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Bangalore University, expressed his reservations over the project. He



pointed out that the project could face problems with geological complexities with hard rocks and fissures, making tunneling difficult and expensive; major

disruptions in water table, affecting nearby water sources and structures; Bengaluru's soil being prone to settlement and instability, potentially affecting tunnel structural integrity; special design considerations for tunnel stability; and environmental concerns as tunneling can impact nearby ecosystems, water bodies, and air quality. It was precisely due to these challenges and the high costs that the idea of having a Metro Rail network completely underground in Bengaluru was not taken. Vehicular traffic, unlike Metro Rail's movement, is highly

erratic, posing a high risk. "Rockfalls or tunnel collapses, gas leaks or explosions, flooding or water ingress, and fire risks from equipment or materials are the challenges in the tunnel project," he said. Former professor of Geology and Coordinator Bio Park of Bangalore University Renuka Prasad said Bengaluru in recent years has witnessed tremendous vertical growth with building foundations and metro pillars going deeper underground. There are lakhs of borewells that are dug deeper and many apartments have multi-level basement parking. All these structures might be affected due to the tunnel road project. He also pointed out that tunnels will hamper groundwater flow and cause shortage of drinking water. P2

Religious symbols on electric poles spark row

RAGHOTTAM KOPPAR @Koppal

IN an unusual development, the tahsildar of Gangavati on Thursday issued an order to remove bow, mace and arrow-shaped electric poles in the town and withdrew it after some time. The tahsildar ordered the removal of electric poles in Gangavati town after the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) filed a complaint with the Koppal deputy commissioner stating that such symbols hurt the religious sentiments of people from minority communities. The DC had asked the tahsildar to look into the complaint. The electric poles with reli-



gious symbols were erected from Julnagar to Rana Pratap Circle in the town a few months ago. In his order, the tahsildar had also suggested filing a case against the engineers of Karnataka Rural Infrastructure Development Corporation (KRIDL) in connection with erection of such electric poles. P4